

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EB-08 DOE-11 SOE-02 INT-05
/037 W

-----017122 171313Z /72

R 151030Z MAR 78

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO AMEMBASSY MBABANE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7408

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JOHANNESBURG 0684

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC, BTIO, EMIN, WZ

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECTS: COAL PROCESSING FOR SWAZILAND

REF: STATE 060395

1. WE HAVE READ WITH INTEREST CONTENTS OF REFTEL AND HOPE WE MAY BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY AS TO (SAY) ASSESSMENT OF COAL OCCURRENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS POSED IN PARA 7. WE HAVE INFO COPY OF 77 MBABANE 1935 BUT WERE NOT AWARE OF SUBSEQUENT MESSAGES (77 STATE 209491, 77 MBABANE 2547, 77 MBABANE 0465 AND 77 MBABANE 0565). THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MINOR COMMUNICATIONS SLIP-UP ONLY, BUT MAY WE HAVE COPIES OF MISSING CABLES (BY POUCH) TO FILL IN THE GAPS?

2. RRO SWEETWOOD HAS BEEN LOOKING TOWARD VISIT TO SUBJECT COAL AREAS SINCE HEAVY RAINS THWARTED INITIAL ATTEMPT. WEATHER MAY BE CONSIDERATION AT PRESENT TIME AS WELL. IF, HOWEVER, EMBASSY PERCEIVES NO OBJECTION, SWEETWOOD WOULD LIKE TO
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MAKE EARLY TRIP TO THE DEPOSIT AREAS AND, IF TIMELY, TO ALSO DISCUSS WITH APPROPRIATE MINISTRY OFFICIALS GOS PLANS FOR THE EXPANDED DEVELOPMENT ENVISAGED IN MBABANE 1935. (FYI: WHILE THE SUBJECT OF SWAZI COAL HAS NOT SURFACED PUBLICLY IN SOUTH AFRICA RECENTLY TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, FORMER GOS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DIRECTOR, D. R. DEVLETTER, INFORMALLY ADVISED SWEETWOOD LAST NOVEMBER THAT JOHANNESBURG CONSOLIDATED

INVESTMENT COMPANY (JOHNNIES) APPEARED TO BE SHOWING RENEWED INTEREST IN SWAZI COAL, FOLLOWING SHELL COAL'S ENCOURAGING EXPLORATORY RESULTS OF 1977. DE VLETTER OPINED THAT BOTH FORMS HAVE EXPORTS OF BLEND COKING COALS TO SOUTH AFRICA IN VIEW, BUT HE DID NOT RULE OUT COAL-TO-OIL CONVERSION AND DOWNSTREAM PRODUCT OUTPUT FOR EXPORT AS LONGER RANGE POSSIBILITY IF RESERVES JUSTIFY THE EXPENDITURE -- AND GIVEN FAVORABLE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS. END FYI.)

3. SWEETWOOD ANXIOUS TO DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS WITH EMBOFFS, PLUS DEVELOPMENTS IN CHROME ORE PROCESSING PLANT, PROGRESS IN BARITE, STATUS OF IRON ORE MINING AND ASBESTOS OUTLOOK. YOUR VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE APPRECIATED.
GOLINO

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